

LAFAYETTE HOUSE
Southwest Corner Bay and Scott Streets
Beaufort, South Carolina

HABS No. SC-139

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

John Mark Verdler House
801 Bay and Scott Streets
Beaufort
Beaufort County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-139

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An Addendum to
Lafayette House
Southwest corner Bay and Scott Streets
Beaufort, South Carolina
in HABS Catalog Supplement (1959)

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ADDITIONAL
FOLIOS

JOHN MARK VERDIER HOUSE

An Addendum to
Lafayette House
Southwest corner Bay and Scott Streets
Beaufort, South Carolina
in HABS Catalog Supplement (1959)

Address: 801 Bay and Scott Streets, Beaufort, Beaufort
County, South Carolina.

Present Occupant: Several commercial tenants.
Present Owner: The Beaufort Museum, Beaufort, South Carolina.
Present Use: Office building and museum.

Brief Statement
of Significance: A late 18th century house where Lafayette was a
guest in 1825, with elegant architectural features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: John Mark Verdier. Now the Beaufort Museum.
2. Date of erection: c. 1795-1800.
3. Notes on original plan and construction of building: The main stories retain the original plan.
4. Notes on known alterations: Sometime after 1862 the portico was removed; it was restored in recent years. Careful restoration work is being done in stages; that of the ballroom or drawing room has been completed to date.
5. Sources of information; primary and unpublished sources: A stereo-pair photographic print of the front of this house is in the Beaufort Library. It was taken in 1862 by Sam A. Cooley, photographer of the 10th U. S. Army Corps. It shows the portico in place, with a central single flight of steps (these could not be restored because of street widening).

Secondary and published sources: South Carolina, in American Guide Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

Information was also furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Howard E. Danver, Beaufort, South Carolina.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with Structure:
The Marquis de Lafayette spoke from the portico of this house on his visit to Beaufort in 1825.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A town house of early post-Revolutionary times with elegant exterior and interior details of modified Adam Style, largely preserved.
2. Condition of fabric: Sound. Parts have been repaired and restored; the remainder is to be cleaned, repaired and restored in stages.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions, number of stories and bays, layout--shape: Two stories over high basement; five by three bays; 40' x 31'; portico 7' x 13'; faces south, rectangle with projecting portico.
2. Foundations: Stucco on tabby.
3. Wall construction: Frame, clapboards (largely replacements) 5" and 6" wide, painted white. There is a carved rope molding at the corner boards.
4. Porches, stoops: Porch was restored from evidence on 1862 photograph. It has two tiers over a high stoop. At the first story are four Doric columns, the central bay being widest; at the second story are four Doric columns, with Ionic pilasters behind them on the wall. There is a pediment. The lower ceiling has exposed floor joists, the upper has an interior cornice with modillions. The tympanum is of shiplap. Divided stairs now give access to both ends; the older single central flight could not be restored because of closeness to the modern street paving.
5. Chimneys: Two interior chimneys, stuccoed above the roof.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is from the first floor of the portico, on axis. There is a pair of paneled pilasters with relief ornament--wheat stalks, etc.--surmounted by consoles with pendant acanthus leaves. The cornice breaks out

over pilasters and swells out in the center; in the bed moldings is a dentil course. In the frieze is a center block with an urn in low relief; on each side the frieze contains a swag. Over the pilasters are end blocks, each with an elliptical rosette placed vertically. Above the door is a semi-elliptical plain glazed transom; there are low-relief fans in the spandrels. The door is single, with six molded panels containing interior bead moldings concave at the corners. The door is mahogany, hung on three butts, with a large brass box lock and brass knob. The door and doorway appear original.

- b. Windows and shutters: Double-hung sash, nine lights over nine lights, architrave trim. No shutters are in place, but some pintles remain.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hip roof, covered with modern composition shingles.
- b. Cornice: There is a wooden cornice, below which is a narrow frieze. The bed molding contains a cyma recta. A modern sheet metal gutter hangs outside the cornice.

C. Technical Description of Interior

- 1. Floor plans; first floor: Central hall, widening at the rear to accommodate the stair; two rooms at each side, those at the front being deeper. There is a chimney at each side, with projections into the rooms, centered on the interior wall. 11'-4" ceiling height. Second floor: similar, except that the (southeast) ballroom or drawing room extends through the area over the front hall, thus occupying two by three bays. 10'-9 1/2" ceiling height.
- 2. Stairway: There is a central flight of 13 risers to the landing; divided flights of 8 risers return above the landing. Open string, brackets with scrolls, round mahogany handrail. Plain thin round balusters, two per tread. Treads are longleaf yellow pine heartwood.
- 3. Doors: Interior doors are similar to the one in the entrance--3'-2" x 7'-3 1/2" x 1 5/8", mahogany. Good condition except for surface finish, which is fair.

4. Finish and trim:

- a. General. This, and the entrance doorway, has been painted many times and much of the finer details are obscured. Some relief ornaments have lost fragments, and some dentils, etc. are missing. Most of the interior finish has not yet been restored; it is, however, in a reasonably complete state.
- b. Southeast parlor on first floor. This is paneled full height. The room cornice has a band resembling rifle cartridges between the frieze and bed moldings. A door to the hall has architrave trim, frieze with center block containing an elliptical rosette, ornamented dentil course, cornice undulating in plan with swelling over the center. The chimney breast projects, containing an oval panel over the mantel. There is an ornamented Adam mantel with reliefs in the frieze, center block, pilasters; ornamental detail nearly obscured by paint. There is a small closet at each side of the chimney with architrave trim on the openings; doors are not original. There is a stone hearth. A paneled wainscot has reeding along the dado rail. The ceiling is plastered.
- c. Southwest parlor on first floor. This is generally similar to the parlor described above (b).
- d. Hall on first floor. This is plastered above the wainscot, which is paneled, with a molded base and dado rail. The wooden room cornice has a frieze, dentil course and modillions. Doorways to front rooms have architrave trim, frieze, and cornice with dentils and modillions. Doorways to rear rooms have only architrave trim. Between the front and rear portions of the hall is an elliptical arched opening with ornamented keystone, engaged Corinthian columns, and full entablature for impost.
- e. Hall on second floor. This has a wood cornice with frieze, dentils and rope molding. Walls are plastered above the wainscot; ceiling is plastered. Wainscot, doors and door trim are similar to those in the rear hall below.
- f. Window at stair landing. There is a Palladian window, with reeded pilasters, full entablature breaking out over the pilasters in a convex curve, dentils and modillions. The central opening has an archivolt.
- g. Rear rooms of second floor. Each has a fireplace with architrave trim, mantel shelf with rope molding in bed moldings, and simple wood room cornice. Walls have been covered in places with modern com-

position board.

Drawing room (locally known as ballroom).

It is located on the second floor, southeast corner. It has two windows on the east wall, three on the south wall, two doors on the west wall, a door to the hall, and a fireplace flanked by closet doors, on the north wall. This room has been cleaned and repaired with great care in recent years, and painted. The ceiling is plastered; walls are plastered and papered. The wood base is ornamented with a strapwork lozenge band at the top. The chair rail has fluted and plain sections, alternating. Window trim consists of a molded architrave with a fluted band; it extends to a plinth at the base. Below the window stool is a wood panel. Door trim consists of a similar architrave, with frieze over the head, and a console at each end. There is a rosette on an elliptical center block in the frieze. The door cornice breaks out over each console and swells out at the center; it contains a dentil course and modillions. The fireplace opening is faced with marble and ornamented with an Adam mantel of wood; engaged Ionic columns carry an entablature, which breaks out over the columns, with a low-relief urn in the frieze over each. The central panel in the frieze is molded and bears an incomplete relief with figures; this ornament was found as scattered fragments and reassembled, after study, by Samuel Gaillard Stoney of Charleston, South Carolina. The subject of the relief panel deals with Tarquin's son. On each side of the frieze is a swag. A delicate mantel shelf is carried on a bed molding consisting chiefly of a large cove with a row of acanthus leaves. Over the mantel are simple Doric pilasters, paneled, extending to the room cornice; they frame an elliptical panel with fans in the four spandrels. The room cornice of wood is a complete entablature--a narrow architrave with fluting, plain frieze, and cornice with dentils and modillions; one section on the north wall to the left of the chimney had been damaged by fire and was replaced, but with inferior workmanship, in the course of restoration.

Southwest room, second floor:

This room is simpler than the drawing room, which it adjoins, but harmonizes well with it. There is a paneled wainscot, architrave trim around door and window openings, Adam mantel with ornamental reliefs in the frieze, and a room cornice consisting of a full entablature with fluted triglyphs and a dentil course molded in section (cyma reversa oriented as it would be in a base).

5. Flooring: Boards of longleaf yellow pine heartwood varying from 4 1/2" to 6 1/4" in width; most appear to be original. The condition of their finish varies from room to room, but they appear generally sound.

6. Heating: Originally by means of a fireplace in each room.
 7. Miscellaneous: The basement, with floor level near grade, has been finished on the interior for rental purposes and utilities. Apparently the rear third of it was once an open arcade or porch.
- D. Site and Surroundings: The house is on the corner of a now busy business block, with very small side yards. It faces south. When built, it was near the owner's wharf and commanded a view of the harbor. No accessory buildings remain.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
August 1963.

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